

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended): An ink jet recording apparatus comprising:

a recording head mounted on a carriage, the recording head being reciprocally movable in a width direction of a recording sheet; and

a sub-tank for supplying ink to the recording head from an ink cartridge, wherein the sub-tank is mounted on the carriage with the recording head, the sub-tank comprising:

an ink level detector, configured to detect at least a low ink state in which quantity of ink stored in the sub-tank is smaller than a predetermined value, and a full ink state in which the quantity of ink stored in the sub-tank reaches the predetermined value, and

an ink consumption counter, configured to acquire the total quantity of ink ejected or discharged by the recording head,

wherein the ink level detector and the ink consumption counter are configured to operate simultaneously, and

~~wherein, the ink cartridge is configured to supply~~ a controller for supplying ink to the subtank as a direct consequence of ~~when the ink level detector detects~~ detecting the low ink state and the value acquired by the ink consumption counter ~~reaches~~ reaching a predetermined count value.

2. (original): The ink jet recording apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined count value stored in the ink consumption counter is set equal to or smaller than a value obtained by subtracting the quantity of ink to be ejected by the recording head during one cleaning operation from an effective ink quantity in the sub-tank.

3. (original): The ink jet recording apparatus according to claim 1, wherein an ink supply valve is disposed along an ink supply path extending from the ink cartridge to the sub-tank, and when the ink supply valve is opened, ink is supplied to the sub-tank.

4. (original): The ink jet recording apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the ink cartridge stores an ink pack composed of a flexible material in which ink is enclosed, an outer block member of the ink cartridge is airtight, and air compressed by an air compressor is applied to a space defined between the ink pack and the outer block member, and ink from the ink cartridge is supplied to the sub-tank under the compressed air.

5. (Currently amended): An ink jet recording apparatus comprising:
a recording head mounted on a carriage, the recording head being reciprocally movable in a width direction of a recording sheet; and

a sub-tank for supplying ink to the recording head from an ink cartridge, wherein the sub-tank is mounted on the carriage with the recording head, the sub-tank comprising:

an ink level detector, for detecting at least a low ink state in which quantity of ink stored in the sub-tank is smaller than a predetermined value, and a full ink state in which the quantity of ink stored in the sub-tank reaches the predetermined value, and

an ink consumption counter, for acquiring the total quantity of ink ejected or discharged by the recording head,

wherein the ink level detector and the ink consumption counter operate simultaneously,
and

~~wherein, when the ink level detector detects the low ink state and the value acquired by the ink consumption counter reaches a predetermined count value, ink is supplied to the sub-tank by the ink cartridge,~~
a controller for supplying ink to the sub-tank as a direct consequence of the ink level detector detecting the low ink state and the value acquired by the ink consumption reaches a predetermined count value,

wherein the ink cartridge stores an ink pack composed of a flexible material in which ink is enclosed,

wherein an outer block member of the ink cartridge is airtight,

wherein air compressed by an air compressor is applied to a space defined between the ink pack and the outer block member, and ink from the ink cartridge is supplied to the sub-tank under the compressed air,

wherein the ink level detector is capable of detecting an overflow state in which the quantity of ink stored is greater than in the full ink state, and

when the overflow state is detected, an operation is performed for opening the ink supply valve and for releasing, to the atmosphere, the air compressed by the air compressor.

6. (Previously presented) The ink jet recording apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the ink level detector for detecting the quantity of ink retained in the sub-tank includes:

a float member, which floats on ink that is supplied to the sub-tank;
a permanent magnet mounted on the float member; and
a magnetoelectric element for outputting an electrical signal in response to magnetic force generated by the permanent magnet according to a relative position of a float position of the float member and the magnetoelectric element.

7. (Original): The ink jet recording apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the ink quantity counter obtains the quantity of ink consumed by performing a multiplication process using a coefficient based on the number of ink droplets ejected by the recording head, and by performing a multiplication process, using a coefficient, each time a cleaning operation is performed to suck and discharge ink from the recording head.

8. (Currently amended): An ink supply method of controlling supply of ink to a sub-tank of an ink jet recording apparatus which comprises a recording head which is mounted on a

carriage and is reciprocally moved across the width of a recording sheet, the sub-tank to which ink from an ink cartridge is supplied and from which ink is supplied to the recording head, an ink level detector for detecting the quantity of ink retained in the sub-tank, and a ink consumption counter for calculating, as a count value, total quantity of ink ejected or discharged by the recording head, the method comprising the steps of:

detecting the quantity of ink stored in the sub-tank by the ink level detector;

referring to the count value acquired by the ink consumption counter and determining whether the referred value reaches a predetermined count value where a low ink state in which the quantity of ink stored in the sub-tank is smaller than a predetermined value;

supplying ink from the ink cartridge to the sub-tank as a direct consequence of~~when~~ the ink level detector ~~detects~~detecting the low ink state and the referred value ~~reaches~~reaching the predetermined count value,

wherein, the detecting and referring steps are performed simultaneously.

9. (previously presented): The method according to claim 8, wherein

when the ink level detector detects a full ink state in which the quantity of ink reaches the predetermined value, an ink supply halt operation for halting the supply of ink from the ink cartridge to the sub-tank is performed.

10. (previously presented): The method according to claim 9, wherein the count value stored in the ink consumption counter is reset when the ink supply halt operation is performed.

11. (previously presented): The jet recording apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the magnetoelectric element is positioned on a side wall of the sub-tank and a recessed portion is formed in the side wall of the sub-tank where the magnetoelectric element is positioned, so that the distance between the magnetoelectric element and a trajectory, along which the permanent magnet attached on the float member travels, is reduced.

12. (canceled):